

Esther Handy

Date: December 10, 2021

Version: 1

Amendment B

to

RES 32029 – General Rules and Procedures

Sponsors: CM Herbold and CM Mosqueda

Electronic Participation

Beginning on p. 5 of Attachment 1 to Resolution 32029, make the following changes:

II. CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS

A. Regular Meetings – Time; Location; Quorum; Preliminary Agenda.¹

1. The City Council shall meet each Monday except as listed below. Regular meetings shall convene at 2 p.m., and the City Clerk shall enter the time of adjournment in the Journal of the Proceedings.

a. If a Monday is a legal holiday, then the regular meeting shall be held on the next day that is not a legal holiday.

b. Regular meetings are not held on the last two Mondays in August nor on the last two Mondays in December.

c. Any regular meeting may be canceled by the President or a majority vote of CMs.

2. Regular meetings are held at Seattle City Hall in the Council Chamber. The City Council may meet at another location in the event of an emergency or disaster.²

3. A quorum consists of a majority of all nine CMs except as listed below.³

a. During a declared emergency under Article V, § 2 of the Charter, a quorum shall for all purposes consist of a majority of all CMs who are available to participate in City Council meetings and are capable of performing the duties of the office; and in such a declared emergency for all purposes, the City Council shall consist of a majority of such CMs available to participate in regular City Council meetings.

¹ Charter, Art. IV, § 6.

² Charter, Art. IV, § 6.

³ Charter, Art. IV, § 3.

Esther Handy

Date: December 10, 2021

Version: 1

b. Except when Rule II.A.3.a applies, in order to select a person to fill a vacancy on the City Council, a quorum shall consist of a majority of those CMs currently holding office.

4. Less than a quorum of CMs may adjourn from day to day, or until the next regular meeting, and may compel the attendance of absent members in such a manner and under such penalties as the City Council prescribes.⁴

(See Rule II.D.3 Attendance.)

5. Preliminary agendas of upcoming regular meetings shall list items on which action is expected to be taken and shall be made available to the public. All reasonable effort shall be made to publish the preliminary agenda online at least two business days prior to the meeting.

~~6. If a CM is not able to be present at a regular City Council meeting under Rule II.D.4, the CM may participate and vote by any electronic means (e.g., multi-party telephone or video conferencing) utilized by the Council for such purpose. If the CM is unable to participate electronically, the CM shall inform the President and City Clerk as soon as practical.~~

6. The Council prefers to conduct its business in person when practicable. Recognizing that CMs may not be able to attend every meeting in person due to unavoidable and sometimes unforeseeable circumstances, any CM may at their sole discretion participate and vote by any electronic means (e.g., multi-party telephone or video conferencing) utilized by the Council for such purpose provided that the Office of the City Clerk is able to accommodate such participation. A CM shall endeavor to provide the Council President with notice of their intent to participate and vote electronically at least 48 hours whenever possible.

B. Special Meetings – Calling; Notice; Limitations; Location.

A special meeting is a meeting held at a time, date, or location that differs from a regular meeting.

1. The Mayor, the President of the City Council, or any three CMs may call a special meeting.⁵

2. Notices of special meetings shall be in accordance with RCW 42.30.080.

a. The only items of business for which final action may be taken at a special meeting are those items listed on the written notice.

⁴ Charter, Art. IV, § 3.

⁵ Charter, Art. IV, § 6.

Esther Handy

Date: December 10, 2021

Version: 1

b. Special meetings are held in the Council Chamber in Seattle City Hall unless: a specific alternate location is established by the party calling the meeting, whether the Mayor, the President, or three CMs; and notice as required under RCW 42.30.080 is given.

3. The Council prefers to conduct its business in person when practicable. Recognizing that CMs may not be able to attend every meeting in person due to unavoidable and sometimes unforeseeable circumstances, any CM may at their sole discretion participate and vote by any electronic means (e.g., multi-party telephone or video conferencing) utilized by the Council for such purpose provided that the Office of the City Clerk is able to accommodate such participation. A CM shall endeavor to provide the Council President with notice of their intent to participate and vote electronically at least 48 hours whenever possible.

~~3. If a CM is not able to be present at a special City Council meeting, and if approved by a majority of CMs present and voting at the meeting, the CM may participate and vote by any electronic means (e.g., multi-party telephone or video conferencing) utilized by the Council for such purpose.~~

~~4. If a CM is not able to be present at a special City Council meeting under Rule II.D.4, the CM may participate and vote by any electronic means (e.g., multi-party telephone or video conferencing) utilized by the Council for such purpose. If the CM is unable to participate electronically, the CM shall inform the President and City Clerk as soon as practical.~~

C. Emergency Meetings – Calling; CMs’ Electronic Attendance.

1. Emergency City Council meetings may be called by the Mayor, President, or any two CMs, consistent with the provisions of chapter 42.30 RCW and RCW 42.14.075.⁶

2. Meeting time, location, and notice requirements do not apply to emergency meetings called for emergency matters as permitted by RCW 42.30.070, RCW 42.30.080, and RCW 42.14.075.

3. Emergency meetings are open to the public unless exempt under chapter 42.30 RCW.

4. If a natural disaster, fire, flood, earthquake, enemy attack, imminent enemy attack, or other catastrophic emergency that renders a CM’s physical attendance at a meeting impracticable, or if approved by a majority of CMs present and voting at an emergency meeting, the CM may participate and vote by any electronic means (e.g., multi-party telephone or video conferencing) utilized by the Council for such purpose.

⁶ Charter, Art. IV, § 6.

Esther Handy

Date: December 10, 2021

Version: 1

~~5. If a CM is not able to be present at an emergency City Council meeting under Rule II.D.4, the CM may participate and vote by any electronic means (e.g., multi-party telephone or video conferencing) utilized by the Council for such purpose. If the CM is unable to participate electronically, the CM shall inform the President and City Clerk as soon as practical.~~

5. The Council prefers to conduct its business in person when practicable. Recognizing that CMs may not be able to attend every meeting in person due to unavoidable and sometimes unforeseeable circumstances, any CM may at their sole discretion participate and vote by any electronic means (e.g., multi-party telephone or video conferencing) utilized by the Council for such purpose provided that the Office of the City Clerk is able to accommodate such participation. A CM shall endeavor to provide the Council President with notice of their intent to participate and vote electronically at least 48 hours whenever possible.

...

Effect: The Council rules that are currently in effect (i.e., before the Council takes action on Resolution 32029) allow Councilmembers to attend regular Council meetings electronically only in the narrow circumstances enumerated in Rule II.D.4: only when a Councilmember has been “granted a leave of absence by submitting written notice to the President as soon as practical of a personal situation that would entitle a City employee to family and medical leave, paid parental leave, or paid family care leave under Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) Sections 4.26.010, 4.27.020, or 4.29.020.” There is no provision for the Council to authorize any Councilmember to attend a Council meeting electronically for other reasons.

There are similar (but different) restrictions in the current Rules for special and emergency Council meetings.

At its December 8 meeting, the Governance and Education did not vote on what had been labeled Amendment 16 regarding electronic participation.

Amendment B would allow Councilmembers to participate in regular, special, and emergency meetings of the City Council electronically for any reason provided that staff can accommodate such participation. It states the Council’s preference for in-person meetings when practicable. Finally, it establishes an expectation (but not a requirement) that Councilmembers will endeavor to provide notice of their intent to participate electronically at least 48 hours in advance of the Council meeting.